United States Geological Survey. Ages ago this part of the Atlantic Coastal Plain was from time to time covered by the sea, into which streams swept vast quantities of mud, sand and gravel and boulders which formed thick deposits that covered large areas. When the region finally emerged from the sea the Potomac River cut its valley in these deposits, which were carried about here and there also by smaller streams. The larger boulders are derived from the granite on which the gravel lies, but some of the smaller pebbles come from parts of the Potomac basin beyond the Blue Ridge and others from veins of quartz in the granites of the Piedmont Plateau.

Over the layer of plant débris and muck in this old swamp fine clay and pebbles were laid down by streams of water during the glacial epoch, when the northern part of North America, as far south as northern Pennsylvania, was covered with immense sheets of thick ice, showing that the trees lived in the latter part of the Great Ice Age, which is variously estimated to have ended from 20,000 to 30,000 years ago.

OPPOSITION TO EVOLUTION IN MINNESOTA

IT was reported in SCIENCE last week that at a conference in St. Paul, Minn., of pastors representing Baptist, Congregational, Presbyterian and Lutheran churches, it was decided to issue a call for a state-wide meeting of Protestant ministers to oppose the teaching of evolution in the public schools of Minnesota.

At this meeting, which was held on October 26, the following resolutions were passed:

Preamble—As American citizens we believe in the complete separation of church and state, and are opposed to religious teaching in public schools—higher or lower.

As those who wish to teach Christianity must support their private schools, we believe it but just that those who wish to teach anti-Christian theories should be forbidden the use of tax supported schools for propagating their opinions.

Whereas, The evolutionary hypothesis has come to be accepted by many American teachers, and is increasingly taught in the public schools of Minnesota, including high schools, our state normals and state university, and

Whereas, This hypothesis, after sixty-three years of study, remains wholly unproven, and has increasingly shown itself to be a foe to the Christian faith, denying as it does the veracity of the Scriptures,

Therefore be it resolved, That we, citizens of Minnesota, representing thousands of our fellow citizens, hereby utter our protest against this propaganda of infidelity, palmed off in the name of science, and we call upon the trustees of state institutions to demand of teachers a cessation of such teaching and the removal from our schools of such text-books as favorably present the same.

We do this in the interest of true science *vs.* science falsely so-called; and in the interest of fair dealing.

We hold that the first amendment to the constitution of the United States, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," was never intended to be interpreted that the state should become sponsor for irreligion; and that it is manifestly unfair to impose taxes upon Christian taxpayers to inculcate teaching inimical to the Bible and destructive of civilization itself.

We have waited patiently for this hypothesis to either prove a truth or to pass from public instruction. Having now no prospect of either, we demand that the state shall prove its impartiality toward its citizens by dispensing with a subject that is utterly divisive; and is, in the judgment of thousands of its taxpayers, utterly false.

And we declare that if the school authorities prove derelict in the enforcement of the law relating to the teaching of religion or of theories subversive of the Christian faith, we will appeal to the legislature for the enactment of such laws as shall eliminate from our tax-supported school system this antiscientific and antiscriptural theory of the origin of man and the universe.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGIC SURVEY

ON November 15, David White completes ten years service as chief geologist. This contribution to the administration of the survey has been at the expense of his own scientific work, even though he has thereby increased the scientific value of the work of his associates. It seems fair that his oft-repeated request for permission to return to his own geological studies should now be granted, not only to gratify the natural desire of an investigator

who has laid aside research problems, one after another, but also to promote the advancement of our science.

Effective November 16, W. C. Mendenhall, for more than ten years the geologist in charge of the Lang Classification Board, will be chief geologist. Mr. Mendenhall's twenty-eight years service in the Survey as assistant geologist and geologist, with field experience extending from the Southern Appalachians to Alaska, is a promise of his broad sympathy with all the problems that will come under his direction, and his notable success in using the data contributed by the field branches in the classification of the public-lands is equally a promise of effective administration.

Mr. Mendenhall will be succeeded as chief of the Land Classification Board by Herman Stabler, his close associate in that branch during the past decade. Mr. Stabler's demonstrated capacity both in research and in administration assures the continuance of the successful application of geologic and engineering facts and principles to public land administration.

The return of Mr. White to productive research suggests anew the sacrifice involved in the administration of scientific work. Administration by scientists is the key-note of the Survey's policy, yet the intellectual cost item involved in this drafting of our best investigators must be kept down to a minimum. Had I been free from other demands on my time this past summer, I should have taken this occasion to start a somewhat radical reorganization of the Geologic Branch, the chief purpose of which would be to reduce its administrative overhead—too many geologists are giving valuable time to work for which they were not trained. Necessarily now, this task of simplifying the organization must be left to the new chief geologist and the acting director, but I ask for them a sympathetic acceptance of the proposal for a less elaborate but more elastic grouping of the activities of the branch. Not machinery but product is the measure of efficiency in a government scientific bureau.

GEO. OTIS SMITH,
Director

THE NEW BUILDING OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

ON the afternoon of Monday, October 30, the cornerstone was laid of the new building of the National Academy of Sciences and of the National Research Council at Washington, D. C. This building, construction of which has now been carried above the main floor, occupies a desirable location upon an entire block of land north of the Lincoln Memorial at the western end of the Mall, commanding an excellent and permanent view of the Memorial, the Riverside Park and the bank of the Potomac beyond. The land for this building was purchased through contributions from a group of twenty friends of science.

The building is designed for two main purposes: To house the offices of the two organizations for which it is erected, and to provide space for the exhibition of materials representing certain of the great achievements of science in the past and especially of recent contributions of particular significance in the progress of science. The building presents a façade to the southward 260 feet in length, and will rise to a height of 60 feet above the first floor. In this section there will be three floors for offices, library and special exhibits rooms. Behind this will be a rotunda for general exhibition purposes which will be convertible at need into a lecture room accommodating, with its galleries, over 400 people. The plans permit the addition of other units similar to the southern façade, to complete a quadrangle around the rotunda. The building is being faced with white Dover marble of fine quality and color which makes it in keeping with the other monumental buildings of the city. The cost of the unit at present under construction will be over $1,000,000. The funds for the erection of the building were provided by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

The laying of the cornerstone was a ceremony of the simplest kind without the presentation of any addresses. It was attended by officers and members of the academy and of the Research Council, among whom was the Honorable Herbert Hoover, secretary of commerce.